

The Actuality for Potentiality Metonymy in the English Progressive Aspect

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Jeong, Ja-Yeon. 2005. The Actuality for Potetiality Metonymy in the English Progressive Aspect. *SNU Working Papers in English Linguistics and Language* 4, 173-192. In this paper conceptual metonymy that operates in various interpretations of the progressive aspect in English will be argued for. While the linguistic meaning of the progressive aspect is singular and presents only a part of the situation it describes, more than its linguistic meaning can be communicated with the help of inference by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy. Though such metonymic inferences are hard to recognize in everyday use of the progressive aspect, they are found generally throughout different uses of the progressive. I present the mechanism of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy working in the interpretation of the progressive and explore three different usages of the progressive in the light of this metonymic inference. (Seoul National University)

Keywords: conceptual metonymy, progressive, inference, actuality, potentiality

1. Introduction

In the recent development of cognitive linguistics, metaphor and metonymy have been important considerations as they are regarded as the fundamental organizing principles of human cognition and language use. Unlike the traditional view of metaphor and metonymy, which regards them as tropes or figurative language, the cognitive approach views metaphor and metonymy as the underlying organizing mechanism that shapes everyday language use. Conceptual metonymies, which govern conceptualization, are not only confined to stand-for relationships between nouns, but are also applicable to propositions and even to the meanings of grammatical constructions.

What this study will argue for is that metonymy is also found in a grammatical category in English, namely, the progressive, in the same way as the conceptual metonymy is discovered in interpreting the modal

can by Panther and Thornburg (1999). The various interpretations of the progressive have been mainly viewed in the light of lexical semantics, which considers the different natures of the predicates (e.g. telic, atelic, punctual, state) as essential for each different meaning, or sometimes in a pragmatic framework like relevance theory. However, these diverse meanings are not purely pragmatic inferences; nor are they conceptually separate from each other. For a more systematic account, the conceptual metonymy of ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY is supposed as a mechanism that enables the polysemous nature of the progressive aspect to arise. The various interpretations are thus metonymic inferences rather than independent linguistic meaning.

To make this point, this study would give answers to following four questions: 1) what is conceptual metonymy? 2) How can conceptual metonymy be applied to a grammatical system? 3) What is the cogency of the Actuality for Potentiality metonymy in understanding the polysemy of the progressive? 4) How can each usage of the progressive be systematically explained in the light of metonymic inferencing process? These questions will also give this paper an element of structure. After looking back on the assumptions for conceptual metonymy through some previous studies on this subject, Panther and Thornburg's study (1999) on the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy will be reviewed in order to show how conceptual metonymy can make a contribution to a more systematic explanation of complicated language phenomena. Next, an argument will be put why the progressive aspect should be viewed in the light of ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy and how this metonymy can explain different meanings of the progressive more systematically. Employing this argument, lastly, four different uses of the progressive will be considered among its polysemy the futurate, duration, waxing/waning, and incompleteness as examples that support the claim being argued for in this study.

2. Conceptual metonymy in language and the study of Panther and Thornburg (1999)

In 2.1 below the concept of conceptual metonymy and the assumptions on which Panther and Thornburg's study is based will be briefly reviewed first. Then the results of Panther and Thornburg will be presented and their significance discussed.

2.1 Conceptual metonymy

In order to understand the assumptions which Panther and Thornburg (1999) postulate and on which the present study is also based, it would be better to offer a brief introduction to the previous accounts of conceptual metonymy. The standard, and also traditional definition of metonymy is "the act of referring to something by the name of something else that is closely connected with it."¹⁾ Most well-known example might be an expression like "the White House" for the president or the administration of the United States. Metonymy, however, has now become a term used to cover a broader range of linguistic phenomena.

Recent studies in cognitive linguistics have proposed that metonymy is not only a figure of speech but also a conceptual tool that structures language and thought just as metaphor does. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that "[metonymy] is also like metaphor in that it is not just a poetic or rhetorical device" and metonymic concepts are "part of the ordinary, everyday way we think and act as well as talk" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 37). According to Lakoff (1987), theoretically conceived, metonymy works within an ICM (Idealized Conceptual Model) and thus it is a phenomenon that takes place at the conceptual level. Lakoff introduces "metonymic models," that is, ICMs containing stands-for relations. With a metonymic model part of an ICM can stand for the whole ICM or one element of the ICM may stand for another element of it.

Panther and Radden (1999) also make the assumption that "metonymy is a cognitive phenomenon underlying much of our ordinary thinking and the use of metonymy in language is a reflection of its conceptual status" (Panther and Radden 1999: 2). Radden and Kövecses (1999) present three cognitive properties of metonymy based mostly on the previous explanations of conceptual metonymy by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff (1987). First, metonymy is a conceptual phenomenon. Secondly, metonymy is a cognitive process and not a simple substitution of one thing with another; rather, it should be understood as additive notation. Metonymy interrelates two entities (the vehicle and the target) to form a new, complex meaning. Thirdly, there is a contiguity

1) *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Sixth Edition), 2000, Oxford: The Oxford University Press.

relationship at the conceptual level. An ICM can be the domain where the contiguity relationship exists. According to the three properties, metonymy is thus defined as "a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model" (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21).

The second assumption of Radden and Kövecses (1999) needs to be more fully explicated. The nature of metonymy should be understood as an additive notation rather than being in a substitutive relationship. Metonymy interrelates two entities (the vehicle and the target) "to form a new, complex meaning (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19)." For example, in an utterance like *We need more hands in this factory*, *hands* metonymically stands for *people*. But the sentence is not necessarily synonymous with *We need more people in this factory*, because in the first sentence, *hands* are used to emphasize one aspect of people that they are of help due to its contiguity with the concept of 'help' in our cognition. *Hands* in the sentence, therefore, means 'people that can help or work,' a new complex meaning different both from *hands* and from *people*. It would be more proper to understand metonymy as "a reference-point phenomenon in which one conceptual entity, the reference point, affords mental access to another conceptual entity, the desired target (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 19)."

Radden and Kövecses (1999) argue one more important point in the study of metonymy; metonymic relation is unidirectional. Their claim is that there are cognitive principles which select the most "natural" vehicle-to-target route. In Kövecses and Radden (1998), the scholars have made more elaborate argument on this and introduced types of cognitive principles; for example, HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN, CONCRETE OVER ABSTRACT, OCCURRENT OVER NON-OCCURRENT.

Panther and Thornburg's research also postulates metonymy as an important conceptual tool. Therefore it shares the most of the basic assumptions that Lakoff and Johnson, Lakoff, and Radden and Kövecses have posited about metonymy. Their study also focuses on the pragmatic equivalence between the vehicle and the target; that is, *she was able to finish her dissertation* pragmatically conveys the same propositional content as that in *she finished her dissertation*, although the two sentences are not semantically synonymous (Panther and Thornburg 1999: 334). What Panther and Thornburg mainly deal with in their study are

propositional metonymy. The specific metonymy they argued for will be introduced now in 2.2.

2.2 POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy

Panther and Thornburg aim to verify "linguistic relevance and distribution of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy in seven conceptual and communicative domain" (Panther and Thornburg 1999: 339). Their research also pays considerable attention to the cross-linguistic ubiquity of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy examining both English and Hungarian.

Panther and Thornburg suggest several cognitive domains where the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is supposed to be exploited and postulate several sub-metonymies of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY form in each case. The first sub-metonymy is the sense perception metonymy (the ABILITY TO PERCEIVE FOR ACTUAL PERCEPTION). The potential for seeing, hearing, feeling or tasting something means the actual seeing, hearing, feeling or tasting it. Although its propositional content is a question asking whether the addressee has an ability to see someone, the expression *can you see him?* is used to ask whether the addressee actually sees the person referred by *him*. So *can you see him?* is pragmatically equivalent to the expression *do you see him?* and thus "stands for" the latter metonymically. *I can taste the vanilla* also stands for *I taste the vanilla* in the same way. Other sub-metonymies for POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY are the ABILITY TO PROCESS FOR ACTUAL MENTAL PROCESS (*I can remember when we got our first TV* for *I remember when we got our first TV*), the ABILITY TO ACT FOR ACTION (*I can come to your party* for *I will come to your party*), the DISPOSITION FOR OCCASIONAL BEHAVIOR (*Dogs can be dangerous* for *Dogs behave dangerous sometimes*), and the SKILL FOR DISPLAY OF SKILL (*Mary can speak five languages*). Panther and Thornburg's study introduces some indirect speech act metonymies as sub-metonymies of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy. They also note how strong the metonymic link both with Hungarian and English. The degree of strength varies and the metonymies can be cancelled for, in nature, they are inferences. In Hungarian, the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is also exploited in the use of possibility modal *-hat/-het-* and *tud*, but Hungarian is different from English in that the metonymy is not exploitable in sense-perception domain and only systematically exploited in Actions,

Character Dispositions and Indirect Speech Acts domains.

After empirically showing that the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is at work, Panther and Thornburg's study makes a point in the conclusion that the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is pervasive in both English and Hungarian. While Radden and Kövecses (1999) "preserves the primacy of their cognitive default principle ACTUALITY OVER POTENTIALITY" (Panther and Thornburg 1999: 354), Panther and Thornburg say that the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy is not an exception from the norm but one of the major cognitive principles, even more prevailing indeed than the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY.

Panther and Thornburg's finding that the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy exists in several cognitive areas where the possibility of the modal being used is of great importance. They have clearly shown that a particular metonymy is systematically exploited as an important conceptual principle in everyday linguistic behavior. The interpretation of language does not only rely on purely logical rules but on inferences based on cognitive principles, and this reliance is quite pervasive in language systems than was previously thought. This is why the inferences are accepted as original meanings, and not as inferences. Many of the inferences are highly conventionalized.

However, the existence of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy in the possibility modal cannot guarantee the pervasiveness of the POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY metonymy over the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy throughout a language system by itself. As will be argued in the next section, there is one major grammatical category in which the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy operates systematically.

3. The ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy for the progressive aspect

3.1 Polysemy of the progressive aspect and the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy

Concerning the progressive aspect in English, there has been no definitive, single answer to what its linguistic meaning is. Although that an action or event is in progress at the time of reference seems to be its core, or prototypical meaning, many scholars have assumed there are

diverse meanings according to different usages such as dynamic, duration, temporariness (i.e. limited duration), incompleteness, non-aspectual meaning of future, and the illocutionary effect of politeness (Quirk et al. 1985, Greenbaum 1996, Huddleston and Pullum 2002), as the examples below show:

- (1) Mary is resembling her mother more and more.
- (2) He was dying.
- (3) I am cycling to school this week.
- (4) He was building a house.
- (5) I am leaving tomorrow.
- (6) I was wondering if you'd come.

The different meanings are purportedly produced by non-linguistic conditions such as pragmatic contexts or the semantic nature of the predicates (state, action, telic, atelic, etc.).

Scholars have also not agreed on what can be the proper set of meanings of the progressive. Quirk et al. postulate three features of the progressive aspect: 1) the happening has "duration" 2) the happening has "limited" duration; and 3) the happening is "not necessarily complete." Huddleston and Pullum distinguish the meanings of the progressive more subtly, and even determine what is implicature and what is not. There are six categories of meaning for the progressive aspectuality: 1) the situation is presented as in progress at or throughout T_r ; 2) the situation is viewed imperfectively; 3) T_r is a mid-interval within T_{sit} (implicature); 4) the situation is presented as durative; 5) the situation is presented as dynamic; and 6) the situation is presented as having limited duration (implicature). Besides distinguishing "aspectual" meanings or features, both studies also note non-aspectual uses of the progressive: the progressive futurate and will+progressive. So far, then, the progressive aspect seems to be polysemous.

Descriptions of the semantic nature of the progressive in these studies just discussed, however, needs to be made more systematic. There is no suggestion of any principle that may determine the various meanings of the progressive in each specific usage. As for the implicature meaning

2) Time of reference

3) Time that the described situation occupies

that Huddleston and Pullum (2002) point out, the chapter does not provide any systematic explanation of how implicatures arise. As pointed out in the introduction, however, this variety of senses are not conceptually separate from one another; nor are they purely pragmatic inferences. The supposition proposed in this paper is that the meanings might be generated via metonymic extension just as the various interpretations of the modal *can* are in Panther and Thornburg (1999). Based on the same assumptions as those of Panther and Thornburg, the polysemy of the progressive aspect with conceptual metonymy will be explained. The polysemous nature of the progressive aspect may arise from the operation of metonymy. The various interpretations are thus metonymic inferences rather than independent senses. Hence the conceptual metonymic approach should be able to explain the polysemous nature of the progressive more systematically.

Actuality and potentiality in the light of tense and aspect can be understood through the notion of "realization." While the present study shares the theoretical background and assumptions with Panther and Thornburg's (1999) study on modal, it also benefits from their concepts of "potentiality" and "actuality", which will be again in a target-vehicle relationship here. Since the progressive aspect always has to be combined with tense when the aspectuality is realized in a sentence, the aspect itself can be also understood within the frame of time line. In the frame of tense and aspect, then, potentiality is not only confined to the possibility meaning as it is in the modals like *can*. Rather, the notion of "realization" would be more proper thing to consider when one is to define potentiality in relation with time. In the light of tense and aspect, therefore, potentiality can be understood as "something that is not yet realized at the time of reference." In an analogous fashion, actuality can mean "something which is true (or realized) at the time of reference." This notion concerning "realization" has been one of the key parts in the analyses of the semantics of the progressive aspect (e.g., Dowty (1979) and Bohnemeyer and Swift's (2004)).

Now, the metonymic relationship between actuality and potentiality has to be determined. As it will be explored in the subsequent sections, the progressive aspect is the case where 'actual' vehicles are selected to access 'potential' targets. The reason why the actuality is selected as the vehicle is not only accounted by the empirical fact regarding the usages of the progressive. The ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy is an

adequate explanation when its cognitive basis is considered. Kövecses and Radden (1998) argue that there are cognitive principles governing the selection of the preferred vehicle. Because a salient vehicle entity can "afford easy mental access to a target entity (Kövecses and Radden 1998: 65)," the metonymic relation is unidirectional rather than bidirectional. In this sense, ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY in the progressive can be warranted by a principle, OCCURRENT OVER NON-OCCURRENT, which enables the following route to be preferred; occurrent reality (actuality) becomes a vehicle to access non-occurrent irreality (potentiality).

Attention will now be given to how the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy specifically operates in the English progressive aspect. Before that, one aspectual nature of the progressive will be presented in the first place: the imperfectivity.

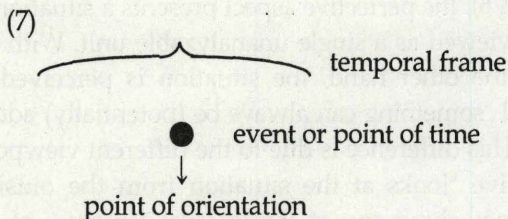
3.2 The imperfective aspect and the progressive aspect

According to Comrie's distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity (Comrie 1976), the perfective aspect presents a situation as a whole; the situation is viewed as a single unanalyzable unit. With the imperfective aspect, on the other hand, the situation is perceived as somehow incomplete and "something can always be (potentially) added to it" (Williams 2001: 1). This difference is due to the different viewpoint of situation. The perfective "looks at the situation from the outside, without necessarily distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation, whereas the imperfective looks at the situations from inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation" (Comrie, 1976: 4). With the external viewpoint the situation is shown as a whole. With the internal view, in contrast, the point in the "middle" of a situation is referred to, for this view is able to show the internal structure of a situation or an event.

This is a significant fact in interpreting the progressive considering that it is the imperfective aspect. In spite of the different meanings of the progressive, an indisputable fact about this type of aspect is that the progressive is imperfective and requires the internal view, presenting only a part, or a phase of a situation, and only that part can be guaranteed to be semantically true at the time of reference. However, we also see in many cases the range a proposition in the progressive form occupies on the time-line is broader than it "ought to be". A proposition

with the progressive aspect can further imply any future event that will follow the referred moment, or imply duration of time of which the referred moment is the central point. This is how actuality in the progressive aspectuality can achieve the additional meaning of potentiality. By way of metonymic inference the meaning of the progressive "stretches out" into the future and into the past. This point can be made clearer by way of considering an example. If someone says *I was cooking dinner when my daughter came in* she is describing the cooking event not as an event occurring only at the very moment of her daughter's coming in but also as an event occurring throughout prolonged time, which stretches to before and after the moment when the daughter came in. In short, potentiality can be communicated by only uttering actuality. This is made possible by metonymic inference; namely, the metonymy named ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY.

Some previous studies on the progressive aspect support this key point. In Quirk et al. the progressive aspect in relation to tense is elucidated with a diagram like this (Quirk et al. 1985: 209):



Regarding the fact that the progressive generally has the effect of surrounding a particular event or point of time with a "temporal frame," Quirk et al. explains that from the point of orientation, "the temporary event or state described by the predicate can be seen to stretch into the future and into the past." This point can be clarified through a pair of examples (Quirk et al. 1985: 209):

(8) When we arrived, Jan *made* some fresh coffee.

(9) When we arrived, Jan *was making* some fresh coffee

Compared to the "time-sequence" interpretation in (8) where two simple past clauses are coordinated, the coordination of simple past and the past progressive in (9) enables "time-inclusion" interpretation. In

brief, according to the account of Quirk and his colleagues the progressive can imply a longer temporal range than the explicitly shown time of reference. Quirk et al. also claims that time-inclusion interpretation is not necessary. This evidences that this interpretation with the progressive is an inference.

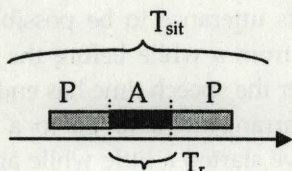
Williams (2001) also provides insight into the idea of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy in the progressive aspect. In his paper on the imperative with the progressive form in English, Williams argues that the first person plural imperative with the progressive form like *Let's be going* involves a "piece of the past" as well as the immediate future action required at the time of speech. For this utterance to be possible there should be a situation that has existed from a while before the time of speech and that will be still in effect after the speech time has ended (e.g. the speaker and the hearer have an arrangement to go to a concert starting in an hour and they should have started a little while ago to be on time). The "piece of the past" and "immediate future action required" play a role like the "temporal frame" in Quirk et al. This feature is present not only in the imperative but also in the assertive with the present progressive. The following example shows the difference between the simple and the progressive in this respect. When someone says *That hurts* we can imagine the context of the utterance as one where the speaker says it just right after someone has made her to feel pain. *That is hurting*, on the other hand, is appropriately uttered after someone causes repeated pain to the speaker for a period of time. To summarize, potential truth-reference in the past and the future can be communicated by only saying the actual truth at the time of reference when progressive is used. This is possible when both of the following facts are acknowledged: the progressive is an imperfective aspect taking internal viewpoint and inference plays a role when situation outside the viewpoint needs to be mentioned.

3.3 Metonymic inference by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY

The two studies mentioned above show that, in many cases, the time of reference in the progressive aspect cannot be identified with the temporal meaning that is actually conveyed. This fact suggests that inference, particularly the one carried out by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy, should operate in interpreting the progressive.

The reason why it is a case of inference and not linguistic meaning is that the meaning of the temporal stretching-out can be cancelled in some cases (this cancelability will be elucidated in the next section with examples). This inferential character in the interpretation of the progressive and its mechanism can be understood better when it is considered in terms of conceptual metonymy. Below is the basic image schema for the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy working with the progressive.⁴⁾

(10)



A: domain of actuality

P: domain of potentiality

The "reference point" (see 2.1) that provides mental access in this case can be identified, not surprisingly, with the time of reference. That is, actual vehicles that are close to T_r is selected to access potential targets that are far from T_r . The cogency of this relationship is more strengthened when the cognitive principle of OCCURRENT OVER NON-OCCURRENT is reminded (I mentioned it as one that can be a cognitive basis of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy in 3.1). The additive notation is at work here, too. The conveyed meaning is not the potentiality domain alone; the propositional contents both in the actuality domain and in the potentiality domain are newly created inference meaning.

In brief, then, what the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy in the progressive aspect means is this; with the progressive, potential truth-reference in the past and the future can be communicated by saying the actual truth-reference at the time of reference.

4) The domain of actuality would be rather spot-like if it should exist. In the diagram it is presented as a ribbon-like figure so that it could be easily understood as the counterpart to the potential domain.

4. Case studies

Among the meanings of the progressive posited by different scholars that were discussed in section 3.1 above, The semantics of three usages of the progressive (futurity, duration, and incompleteness) will be explained through the conceptual metonymy, ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY. The first three occur when the metonymy is exploited, and the last one is the case that shows the cancellation of the metonymic inference.

4.1 Metonymic inferences in the progressive

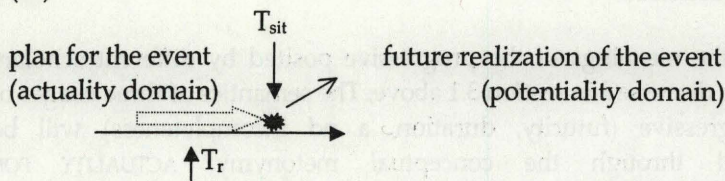
4.1.1 The progressive futurate: THE PRESENT FOR THE FUTURE

The progressive futurate best demonstrates the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy in the progressive. Though some previous research has noted that the futurate is one of the non-aspectual uses of the progressive, the future time interpretation of the present progressive is also due to the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy, which is generally found in any interpretation of the progressive construction. In some cases, usually with adverbs denoting future time, the progressive can indicate time posterior to the explicitly specified:

- (11) I'm phoning her tonight.
- (12) She's having her operation tomorrow.
- (13) Yesterday morning, I was leaving tomorrow on the Midnight Special tonight.

What the present progressive originally refers to in the time line is the moment of speech, which is factual (i.e. actuality). By metonymic extension, however, what is described as true at the moment of speech becomes also true in the time posterior to it: the future. The present progressive can now describe future events, i.e. the potentiality. What plays the role of vehicle in this metonymic relationship is the assertion of the situation as being in the present, or T_r , and the target its potential realization in the future. The diagram that follows exhibits this temporal relationship of metonymic inference:

(14)



Metonymy working in the auxiliary system has been suggested by Radden and Kövecses (1999) in explaining the present futurate and present habitual: the future time interpretation of the present tense sentence like *I am off (tomorrow)* for 'I will be off' and habitual interpretation of the sentence like *Mary speaks Spanish* (Radden and Kövecses, 1999: 33). Both the present futurate and the progressive futurate seem not to differ much in their function of expressing future time. However, there is a crucial difference regarding "how" each construction delivers the future meaning. What this difference is like can be conjectured from the fact that in the present futurate the schedule or plan for future event is more formal than in the progressive futurate (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). When it is introduced that Radden and Kövecses view the present futurate as an instantiation of the PART FOR WHOLE time metonymy, this difference seems to be of more importance regarding the way both types of futurate achieve future meaning. It is hard to see the present futurate in the light of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy because the future event expressed by the simple present tense is not potential; rather, it is an already settled fact that hardly has a chance to be changed. The present tense in the sentence like *I am off* is only part of the whole "factual" event that includes prior scheduling and its actual fulfillment. In the progressive futurate, on the other hand, the time of utterance (which is time of reference in most cases) is not necessarily part of the event that is expected in the future. A plan or schedule does exist at T_r , but whether it will be realized in the future is not guaranteed. The future meaning comes out not so much from the firmness of the plan itself as from the agent's volition to realize the situation expressed. The fact that a sentence like *The sun is rising tomorrow at 5:13* sounds odd may explain it. Therefore, potentiality could be more plausible term to describe the progressive futurate as the future is in a relatively uncertain domain and depends quite largely on agent's "potential". This argument also confirms that the future meaning created

by the progressive is inference rather than linguistic meaning.

4.1.2 Extended duration: A MOMENT OF AN EVENT FOR THE DURATION OF THE EVENT

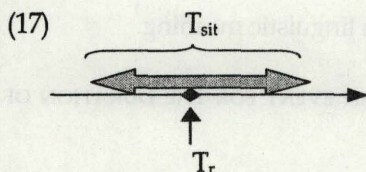
One more feature of the progressive where the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy is found is duration, or extended duration. Progressive aspect can implicate potential "range of time" in which the proposition is understood as true. Although the time of reference in sentences with the progressive aspect is usually regarded as of short or no duration, the truth of the propositions with the progressive is understood as also the case throughout longer time period in some cases. That the progressive can mean temporal duration of a situation is highly conventionalized and accepted as a part of its linguistic meanings (cf. Quirk et al. 1985; Greenbaum 1996; Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

The durational usage of the progressive falls into two types: 1) the case where the progressive is applied to verbs lasting for a short time (e.g. punctuals and achievements) and the background reading of the progressive when the time of reference is specified by a combined subordinate clause (e.g. *when*-clause). The latter is one of the most widely used meanings of the progressive and thus the inference is conventionalized to a high degree. As the examples below show, the proposition can span over a range of time even though the proposition is linguistically true at a moment, namely at the time of reference.

(15) When he came, she was phoning the police.

(16) Be reading the newspaper when my sister enters the room.

It has been already pointed out by Quirk et al. (1985) that in sentences like (15) and (16) the two clauses conjoined in a sentence are in a time-inclusion relationship. The fundamental reason is that the progressive aspect requires an internal viewpoint, but how the time-inclusion interpretation becomes possible is by way of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy. The time of reference at which part of a situation is true becomes the vehicle to access the target meaning, that is, duration of time through which the whole situation is possibly true. The following diagram shows this relationship schematically:



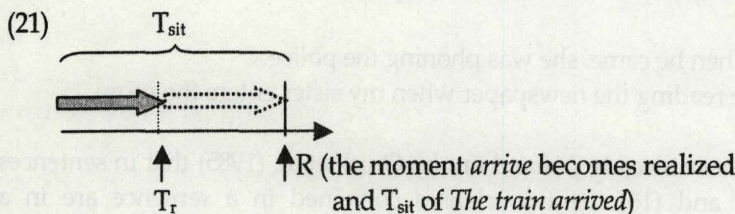
The inference of duration by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy is more obviously found when the progressive is used with punctual predicates, which are usually regarded as incompatible with the progressive aspect. In the following sentences, the events seem to be prolonged by the progressive:

(18) The train is arriving.

(19) He is dying.

(20) She was nodding.

There is an extension of time effected by metonymic inference in these examples. While the predicate *arrive* originally denotes an action happening at punctual time, its progressive form in (18) implies it happened for a specific duration of time. The progressive aspect extends the momentary instant that *arrive* occupies (R in the diagram below) into duration of time that lasts for a certain time. What the sentence (18) describes can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



The ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy operates in the interpretation of the progressive in this way: even though the arrival of the train, or the actual event at the time of reference is not realized when it is uttered, its arrival is also conveyed as a potential event that is strongly expected to follow. In this case, the vehicle is the preliminary stages around T_r and the target meaning is potential realization of the event as well as the duration of time required for it (both arrows). This

"anticipatory interpretation"⁵⁾ also arises in the second. *Die* is also a predicate that is realized at one moment, but in (19) it is also extended by the progressive as if the event of dying is something that happens over a period of time. *He is dying* seems to refer to one moment at which the simple version *He dies* is not true, but it further implies the whole period including the last moment when *He dies* is realized. In brief, when preliminary stages before the realization of an event is said, the potential realization can be communicated. This is a similar inferencing process as the one in the progressive futurate that was discussed earlier, in that the plan or volition in the present further implicates the realization of the future event.

In (20), the nodding at the time of reference, which lasts for a very short moment, is extended both to the near future and to the near past by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy. In this case, however, the duration consists of a sequence of the punctual actions due to the nature of the predicate; one nod lasting for quite a long time is generally regarded as strange pragmatically. In short, referring to a moment where possibly one nodding can occur further implies a sequence of nodding occurring through a course of time.

4.2 Cancellation of the metonymic inference: the incompleteness

What will be presented now is one of the features of the progressive aspect: incompleteness. In this case, however, the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy is not found. On the contrary, the incompleteness implicature is due to the cancellation of the metonymic inference that is widely found in other features of the progressive. Although the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy cannot be seen here, it is effective evidence that the polysemy of the progressive is based on inference and not inherent linguistic meanings.

With predicates of accomplishments, such as *grow up*, *ripen*, *fill up*, and *write a book*, the progressive aspect produces mid-interval implicature: that is, the progressive form of accomplishments implicates only the

5) Quirk et al. note that anticipatory interpretation is possible when transitional acts and events are expressed in the progressive form. This explains that "the progressive refers to a period" leading up to "the change of state," as in *The Boeing 747 is taking off*.

middle part of the situation, not the situation as a whole. The accomplishments have "separable" pre-terminal and terminal phases and thus occurrence of the former does not guarantee the occurrence of the latter (Huddleston and Pullum 2002).

While other interpretations of the progressive discussed in the above sections allow potential domain where metonymic inference becomes possible, there is less room for the inferences in the case of the accomplishment predicates. Contrary to *he is dying*, which strongly implicates his imminent death, *he is building a house* entails that he has not finished building the house yet and does not implicate his building a house. As for *die* it is not possible to separate pre-terminal phase and terminal phase. *Build a house*, on the other hand, consists of many separable phases. When it is in the progressive aspect, it cannot have the implicature that he has built a house, since cancellation of it is possible at any time before the completion of the house.

The cancelability is greater with the past progressive. It is here that the incompleteness implicature arises:

(22) He was writing a novel.

(23) Max was crossing the road.

Unlike its simple aspect counterpart, *he was writing a novel* does not imply he wrote a novel. *Max was crossing the road* does not necessarily imply he had crossed the road, either. Cancellation is natural as seen below:

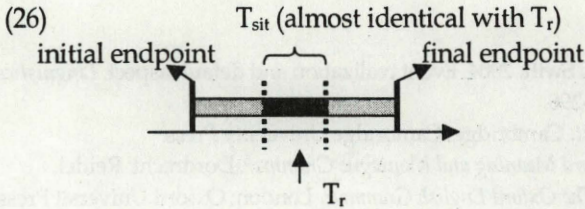
(24) He was writing a novel, *but he stopped soon*.

(25) Max was crossing the road *when he was hit by a bus*.

Rather, there are counterfactual implicatures arising from both sentences. Sentence (22) does imply that he didn't finish writing the novel and (23) implies that Max didn't cross the road. Sentences like these are where the incompleteness interpretation is more salient than the inference of potentiality.

The incompleteness interpretation is a special case among various features of the progressive aspect. One reason for this might be that it is where the linguistic meaning of the progressive (i.e. that part of a situation is presented as true only due to the separableness of phases in

the situation) becomes salient, without any inference meaning by the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy being possible. The situation is not open-ended and the language user is aware that in such kind of situations, their initial and final endpoints do exist. In other words, there is no domain uncertain of its state. Therefore, no extension of meaning to the potential domain is possible. Below is the diagram that shows these characteristics of incompleteness interpretation:



Paradoxically, however, the argument that the metonymic inference generally operates in the progressive aspect is bolstered by the incompleteness meaning. If the various usage and meanings of the progressive are inherent (that is, linguistic meanings), such a process of cancellation and implicature from it would not be possible.

5. Conclusion

The ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy is found generally throughout the various uses of the progressive aspect. In this paper three features of the semantics of the progressive have been examined: the futurate, duration, and incompleteness meaning.

The significant point in the argument and findings of this paper is that even the duration, or "background" reading of the progressive, which is commonly accepted as a linguistic meaning, can be inference in fact. This finding tells us about the pervasiveness and importance of conceptual tools in our language use. Metonymy is not merely a relationship between two linguistic expressions; it is a cognitive principle that actively produces linguistic meaning.

The validity of the cognitive principle ACTUALITY OVER POTENTIALITY is also confirmed by this study. Actual entity, whether it is spatial, temporal or causal, is supposed to be more preferred vehicle, as it is

conceptually close (or immediate, in Kövecses and Radden's (1998) term) to us in our mind. The pervasiveness of the ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY metonymy in the various usages of the progressive support the claim that this principle is actually in work.

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